

# PERSISTENCE



*To Graduation*

Monthly E-news from the Kentucky Department of Education, Division of Student Success



## First Thing First...How Are You Doing?

If there is one thing that this time has made very clear for me personally, it is that if we are not first taking care of our own well-being and giving ourselves grace for our internal struggles, we cannot be as effective when trying to support others – be it our family, students, friends, etc. In 1948, The World Health Organization identified five basic interdependent dimensions of well-being – physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual.

In the field of K-12 education, it seems we have only recently begun to [acknowledge the importance](#) of adult well-being. While I hope that this focus will eventually become embedded in policy and practice at every level, it has been promising that a multitude of webinars, resources, and articles on self-care are being offered during our current immersion into the virtual landscape. Below are four resources that I found personally beneficial (and not overwhelming). I hope they may provide some support for you as well:

- Interestingly, some research revealed that viewing images of nature can yield similar benefits to being in nature. Take a few minutes to view [this brief slideshow](#) of images and quotes from the [Trauma Responsive Educator Project](#). I've revisited several times especially on rainy days!
- The CALM website handpicked some of their favorite meditations, sleep stories, movement exercises, journals, and music. All of the [resources on this page](#) are free to use share!
- Every Friday through June 10, the [Alliance for Strong Families and Communities](#) is offering "COVID-19 Quick Resilience: A Weekly Dose of Self-Care". These 30 minute webinars provide very practical tips and simple activities to support ourselves. You can [sign up on their registration page](#) and also watch prior recordings.
- It seems easy to get swallowed up by all the mainstream news overload about the current situation. Aside from taking long breaks from the regular news, it can be a very helpful balance to check out the [Good News Network](#) from time to time for positive, uplifting stories.

Please check out the *GoTeachKY* initiative called [Teachers Helping Teachers](#). This resource will connect experienced educators to provide virtual coaching and support directly to other teachers to help them deal with the stresses of the COVID-19 crisis. There currently are 80-90 teachers who have volunteered to serve as mentors. These mentors will assist other educators while

school buildings are closed and provide assistance in areas such as content planning, finding helpful resources, using technology, and staying connected with students.

## KDE Updates and Guidance

If you have not already, please check out the [Kentucky Department of Education webpage for COVID-19 Updates and Information](#). This page has a wealth of information and resources about all aspects of our K-12 system at this time divided into three primary categories: educate, feed and support.

Additionally, you might be interested in the Comprehensive Counselors list of resources around [virtual support and counseling to students](#), as well as guidance and an FAQ related to [minimum graduation requirements and graduations during COVID-19](#). On these two pages, if you glance at the left hand side you can toggle to numerous other pages that may be of interest to you.

## Student Mental Health Data Update

As anticipated, student mental health concerns are growing during this time. New data from Mental Health America (collected through its free anonymous online mental health screening program) found:

- The numbers of anxiety, youth, and depression screeners all increased by 18-22 percent in March 2020. The pace of anxiety screenings in April has increased even more.
- “Loneliness and isolation” is cited by the greatest percentage of screeners (58 percent) as contributing to mental health problems “right now,” with COVID-19 close behind (48 percent).

Outreach and connection to our students and families is key! Ensuring students are aware of the following supports is critical at this time:

- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- **Crisis text line:** 471-471
- **SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline:** Call **1-800-985-5990** or text **TalkWithUs to 66746**(24/7, 365-day-a-year, toll-free hotline dedicated to providing immediate crisis counseling for people who are experiencing emotional distress related to any natural or human-caused disaster. This multilingual and confidential crisis support service is available to all residents in the United States and its territories). **The Trevor Project:** Call **1-866-488-7386** ( a national 24-hour, toll free confidential suicide hotline for LGBTQ youth)
- **Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance:** [Online support groups](#)
- **Al-Anon and Alateen :** [Online support groups](#)

Additionally, check out [the Mental Health Technology Transfer Center’s School Mental Health Resources](#) as well as the [Kentucky Center for School Safety](#) site for updated information on a variety of safety-related topics.

## Relevant Research, Practice Tips, and Briefs

**Realities of Remote Learning:** ASCD released a special issue of *Educational Leadership* called [A New Reality: Getting Remote Learning Right](#). This special issue is free and open to all.

**Trauma Sensitive Remote Learning:** TraumaSensitiveSchools.org created [this guide](#) to help us understand how we can conduct remote learning in a trauma sensitive manner.

**Maintaining Relationships:** The importance of connection and relationships in education has finally risen to the forefront! Check out this article from *Edutopia* on [7 ways to maintain relationships during your school closure](#). *Edutopia's* [homepage](#) is also worth a glance as they have a wealth of grounded great reads and strategies.

**April 2020 Infinite Campus News:** Check out the [KSIS news](#) with various articles ranging from student tracking solutions during COVID-19 to updates on the data visualization dashboard.

**KDE Professional Learning Board:** Take a look at the [KDE Professional Learning Board](#) to find various virtual trainings and associated credits offered.

**Kentucky Employees' Expanded Telehealth Services:** The Kentucky Employees' Health Plan (KEHP) has expanded your access to FREE telehealth medical and behavioral health services during the COVID-19 State of Emergency. Telehealth refers to a variety of virtual provider visits that primarily include both video and audio interaction but could also be just a telephone visit. KEHP members you can use telehealth services for primary care, specialist, behavioral health, or substance abuse visits with both in-network and out-of-network providers. These visits are covered for FREE for 90 days effective March 17, 2020. Get started [here](#).

**Free Online Learning Games:** The Institute of Educational Sciences has provided a [list of free educational games](#) now available at no costs until the end of the school year. Here are two examples in the area of social and health safety:

- **PlayForward: Elm City Stories**, developed by Yale for adolescents aged 11-14 focused on sexual health and risk reduction. Link to [request FREE access](#) to the web-based game
- **smokeSCREEN**, for adolescents aged 10-16, focused on youth decision-making around smoking and vaping. Link to [request FREE access](#) to the web-based game

**List of Well-Organized Online Learning Resources:** Kentucky Educational Collaborative for State Agency Children (KECSAC) created a [thorough list of online learning resources for students](#) in addition to Special Education related resources.

**US DOE Funding Opportunity Announcements:** The US Department is currently soliciting applications under several discretionary grant competitions: (1) [Comprehensive Literacy State Development Program](#) (2) [Teacher and School Leader Incentive Program](#) (3) [Supporting Effective Educator Development \(SEED\) Program](#) (4) [Education Innovation and Research \(EIR\) Program Mid-phase Grants](#).

**Cultivating Self Awareness:** Developed with classroom-based teaching and learning in mind, [Mindfulness in Education: An Approach to Cultivating Self-Awareness That Can Bolster Kids' Learning](#), includes strategies and resource links that can be useful for any and all of us.

## Upcoming Professional Learning Opportunities

**Webinars** (If your inbox is like mine, it is inundated with new webinars every day! Below are just a few😊)

**Strategies for Being Your Best Possible SELF:** This recent webinar from CASEL featuring Dr. Marc Brackett can be watched [here](#). In addition, you can read his article [“Healthy Emotion Regulation During Uncertain Times.”](#) This webinar is part of a series of webinars from CASEL. You can view the CASEL webinar schedule and resources [here](#).

**The Promise of Adolescence Webinars:** There is a webinar series based on a recent National Academies report, titled [The Promise of Adolescence: Realizing Opportunity for All Youth](#). The upcoming webinar will focus [education](#) (May 1 at 1 PM ET). Registration for this webinar is currently open. You can also navigate the [interactive overview of report findings](#), and this [resource](#) focuses specifically on opportunities for the education sector with key findings and recommendations.

**Mental Health Series:** The Pacific Southwest MHTTC School Mental Health Initiative is pleased partner with the National Center for School Crisis & Bereavement to offer a **three-part webinar series** on crisis readiness, response & recovery as a part of our School Violence learning track.

- ***Supporting Grieving Students: How to Be Both Grief-Sensitive and Trauma-Informed***, helps us distinguish the experiences of grief and trauma in children so that we can understand how they inform one another and are also distinct in their support needs. This will be held on May 28<sup>th</sup> from 6-7:30 (ET). You can [register here](#).
- ***Starting a New School Year: Sustaining Recovery from a School Crisis During Periods of Transition***, is offered at the start of our school years to help school and mental health leaders prepare for the year ahead attuned to what may come in transitions. This will be held on August 4<sup>th</sup> from 6-7:30 (ET). You can [register here](#).

**KET Webinars:** Check out the [KET Webinar site](#) for a list and links to various webinars of interest.

**Solutions to the Dropout Crisis Webcasts:** *Solutions to the Dropout Crisis* webcasts are always offered free of cost, and no registration is required. Tune in the second Tuesday of each month at 3:30 PM ET for new [Solutions to the Dropout Crisis](#), where you can also find recordings of previous webcasts.

## Conferences and Activities

**2020 System of Care Academy:** The Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental & Intellectual Disabilities and Eastern Kentucky University invite you to attend the 2020 System of Care Academy. This annual event brings together approximately 500 participants from across the system of care: primary care providers, clinicians, prevention specialists, educators, child care providers, Family Resource and Youth Services Centers staff, juvenile justice staff, community-based services staff, public health staff, families, youth, and interested community members. Due

to COVID-19, the System of Care Academy originally scheduled for June 9-11 will now be an online only event. Registration is free. Watch [this website](#) for updates.

**National Youth Employment Coalition and National League of Cities Re-Engagement Conference: Originally scheduled to be held in Nashville,** this [conference](#) will now be held virtually June 22-25, 1:00-4:00 pm ET each day. Registration cost has been discounted to \$100 per person. An organization rate of \$300 is also offered for up to 6 codes. Registration for youth leaders and current program participants is \$25. Participants will experience cutting-edge professional development, discuss best practices from around the country, learn about new efforts related to youth employment in the South, and problem-solve with colleagues.

**Annual Kentucky Alternative Education Summit:** [Registration is now open](#) for this summit that will be held July 21-22 in Lexington. There is no registration fee for this training event. Participants will be responsible for their own travel and lodging expenses. Please note that as events develop around COVID-19, KECSAC will be monitoring the situation. In the event that the summit has to be rescheduled or changed to a different format, registrations will be honored.

**To close this E-News: A Better Normal** author and activist Sonya Renee Taylor's wrote a powerful call to dream and prepare for a new world to come:

*"We will not go back to normal. Normal never was. Our pre-corona existence was not normal other than we normalized greed, inequity, exhaustion, depletion, extraction, disconnection, confusion, rage, hoarding, hate and lack. We should not long to return my friends. We are being given the opportunity to stitch a new garment. One that fits all of humanity and nature. What we have been forced to leave behind we needed to leave behind. What is getting us through is what we will need to take forward, all the rest is up to us. DREAM. While [you] have time. DREAM of the life you want. DREAM of the world you desire to exist in. Look for the places in your new dreams that have parts of the old world and remove them. What is the dream then? From there we can add to the collective weaving of whatever it is that is next. If we are gonna heal, let it be glorious."*

**Thank you for all that you continue to do! As Andy says "We Will Get Through This Together!"**

If you would like to contribute any information (resources, celebrations, etc.) to this enews, please email [judi.vanderhaar@education.ky.gov](mailto:judi.vanderhaar@education.ky.gov). Also, please share this link with your colleagues who might be interested in subscribing to the [Persistence to Graduation listserv](#) (right click to subscribe)